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## Parents, children get their happy day in court

### Kids officially join their families on Adoption Day

By NICOLE GERRING  
Times Herald

Madonna, Angelina Jolie and Sandra Seely of Port Huron share a common trait.

They're adoptive mothers.

Though the celebrities' adoptions of children from Asia and Africa have made headlines, Seely seemed just as satisfied Tuesday when adopting her granddaughter, 15-year-old Kasoundra Ware.

"I wanted her to be permanently with me and have a home," she said. "We've been close for many years."

To mark National Adoption Day, the St. Clair County Circuit Court invited members of the public and social services to share in the special day for three county families. About 25 people attended the event in the St. Clair County courthouse.

George Spranger, 15 months, of Clyde Township;

Zoom Photo



By NICOLE GERRING, Times Herald

ADOPTION DAY: Maleeya Gut, 3, of Yale joins Probate Judge Elwood Brown on the bench Tuesday.

Zoom Photo

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Maleeya Gutc, 3, of Yale and Ware were among the 235 children in 36 counties adopted Tuesday.

"It's a very happy day," said Seely, who cared for her granddaughter since her mother's guardianship rights were suspended four years ago. "Now she'll be able to see her mom."

Each year since it began in 2003, anywhere from 6 to 16 county families have legalized their adoptions on National Adoption Day. There have been 113 adoptions in St. Clair County in 2006, which is consistent with past years, said Pamela May, adoption case worker for the 31st District Court.

In counties across the state, politicians, judges and agency representatives congratulated the families. The hearings, normally closed to the public, are open to visitors to promote awareness of adoption, said Marcia McBrien, public information officer of the Michigan Supreme Court.

Michigan has organized more National Adoption Day events each year than any other state since the day was created four years ago.

"There's this idea that people need to go out of the state or out of the country to adopt a child, and that's not true," McBrien said. "There are many children in Michigan looking for homes."

Cindy Mey, adoption supervisor in the St. Clair County Department of Human Services, said the greatest needs are among teenagers and minorities.

"There are many who need families, especially older children and children of color," she said.

There are about 114,000 children in the U.S. foster-care system waiting to be



By NICOLE GERRING, Times Herald

FAMILY: George Spranger, 15 months, poses for a photo on National Adoption Day with his parents, Sarah and Marle Spranger of Clyde Township.

adopted, according to the National Adoption Day Coalition. There are 4,500 Michigan children who are seeking to adopt.

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